

[George S. Brown]

Edith L. Crawford,

Carrizozo, N. Mex.

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Carrizozo, N.M.

Words 1291 PIONEER STORY.

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I have lived in Lincoln County fifty-four years. I came here from Cedar Valley Missouri when I was six years old. There were twenty one wagons in our train when we left Cedar Valley for Mesa Arizona, in April 1884. My father tho'mas M. Brown, my mother and four children traveled in four covered wagons drawn by horses. My mother's Father and Mother, Mr. and Mrs. David C. May, drove one wagon drawn by two white oxen. The rest of the crowd in the train were all uncles and aunts and cousins. They had their own covered wagons, drawn by mules. George Murray and his wife (they were relatives of my mother) drove a one horse buggy all the way thro'ugh to Oklahoma, where they decided to locate. There were times when we were on our way that there would be as many as fifty wagons in our train. We would overtake some of them and some would overtake us and we would all go along together for awhile and then these other wagons would drift off on their own way, leaving us twenty-one again. We had two hundred head of stock cattle with us. My father and grandfather owned twenty-five of them. Each family had their own chuck box and cooking utensils, and at night when we made camp each family would build his own fire to cook on. We used buffalo and cow chips for wood on the plains. We made our

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own candles. Grandma May had a mould that you could make four candles at a time. She used any kind of tallow that she could get ahold of, and twine string. [????]

It rained on us a lot on the first part of our trip but was awful dry on the plains in Texas. At night when we camped the 2 men would form a circle with the wagons and put the families and work stock inside the circle and the men folks would stand guard over the cattle.

We had to travel awful slow on account of our stock and ox teams. When we came to a river where we could fish we would stay over for several days and rest. The women folks would do their family washing and all the children that were big enough would go out and gather wild strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and wild plums and our mothers would make preserves out of them. The men folks kept us in meat most of the time by killing antelope and deer. We saw a few buffalo but they were so wild that the men could not get near enough to kill any of them. It rained most all the time on us while we were crossing thro'ugh Missouri, Oklahoma and Kansas. I remember when we crossed the rivers we would have to be towed across on ferry boat and it would take two and three days to get all the wagons and stock across. It was very hard to get the stock onto the ferry boats. We were always on the look out for Indians but were never molested by them. We saw our first Indians when we passed thro'ugh the Cherokee Strip in the Indian Territory. Our cattle were quarantined on the line between Oklahoma and Kansas because they were covered with small ticks they claimed would cause a disease called bloody [murrin?], so my father and the rest of the men decided to sell all the cattle as they did not want to return for the cattle later on and they sold them at quite a loss. We went thro'ugh Dodge City Kansas and crossed the line into Texas at Garden City Kansas. We passed thro'ugh very few towns on our way out here and when we did come to a town we would always stop and buy groceries. All of our water buckets, kegs, wash tubs, dish pans 3 and one flour barrell were made by my Mother's Uncle Jack Bowman, out of red cedar that came from our farm in Missouri and were hand made. He used copper bands to hold them together. We were six months on the road. I remember that we crossed the Canadian River at [?] Texas. It was running bank full when we got there and we had to stay a week before we could get

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across, as there were no ferry boats to cross on. It was quite a cattle country and there were lots of cow boys around. They had a dance one night while we were there and invited us all to come. Grandmother May and Mother and several of the other ladies had never seen any one dance before so they decided to go and see what it was like. The first dance was a waltz and when the couples got up and the men put their arms around the women and started to dance Grandfather May came over to Grandmother and said "Let's get out of here, for this is no place for us," so they all got up and left. The river was still pretty high when we left [?], so the cow boys tied ropes to the wagon tongues and helped us to cross. One of the small mule teams fell down in the middle of the river and the family that was in the wagon came pretty near getting drowned, but there were about twenty cow boys who helped us across so that there was not very much danger of anybody getting drowned. We came thro'ugh the [K?] I T pasture which was on the staked plains in the western part of Texas. We saw lots of antelope and cattle in this pasture. The next town that we came to was Fort Sumner, New Mexico. When we crossed the Pecos River it was up, but we had met up with Oliver M. Lee and his half brother, (I can't remember his name) some where in Texas and they helped us to cross the river. They were coming to New Mexico with a herd of about three hundred 4 horses. They left our wagon train after crossing the Pecos river and we did not see them again until years later. We came on to White Oaks, New Mexico and camped at the Manchester Rock House, about three miles from the town of White Oaks. Father decided to stay in White Oaks for awhile as he liked the country and old Geronimo was on the war path and was somewhere between New Mexico and Arizona, and Father was afraid to take a chance of going on into Arizona. Father began to haul freight from Socorro, New Mexico to White Oaks, for the mines. He hauled the first mining machinery that was brought into White Oaks, for a man by the name of Glass who put in a stamp mill there. We lived at White Oaks for about two months and then Father bought a place on Tortolito Canyon, (Turtle Dove) which is about ten miles southeast of Carrizozo, New Mexico, and at the foot of [?] Peak. We moved there in October 1884. We farmed some and Father freighted for Lincoln, Fort Stanton, Nogal and White Oaks. He bought two big schooner wagons and twenty head of oxen. He could haul a car load of

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flour in the two schooners and that is why he had to use that many oxen to pull the loads. The house on the Tortolito place was a three room house built out of pickets and mud, and one adobe room built about six feet from the picket house. We older boys cut wood from the mountain side and Father hauled it to Fort Stanton and sold it for us.

NARRATOR: George S. Brown, Aged 60 years. Carrizozo, New Mexico.